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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes statewide findings about Maine's Reading Recovery (RR) program based on data from the 1996-97 school year. The information presented in the report includes a brief history of the program in Maine, school-level implementation of the program, demographic information about the children served, the amount of time children spent in the program, program outcomes, literacy achievement over the first-grade year, and information about classroom teachers' professional development in early literacy. At the end of the report, the Statewide Program Coordinator and Trainer of Teacher Leaders gives recommendations. The revised report differs from the original only where the "carried-over" children are concerned; after the initial report was published, additional data on these children were received that compelled researchers to reassess the outcome of this subgroup of children. The 1997-98 Revised Report and Evaluation Supplement focuses on the new data. The supplement explains that many RR students start the program as "second round" children, meaning they start the program after another child has exited (those with the greatest needs, "first round" children, are started first). Therefore, the second round children do not receive their first RR lesson until late winter or the early spring of their first grade year and the school year ends before they can complete the program. The supplement represents the first report to focus solely on the progress of such "carried-over" children. (NKA)

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State of Maine Reading Recovery® Revised Report and Evaluation, 1996-1997 [and] Supplement: Carried-Over Children

Paula Moore, Daria C. Lysy, Rosemary Bamford, Tonya Kimmey, and Anne K. Rhodes-Kline

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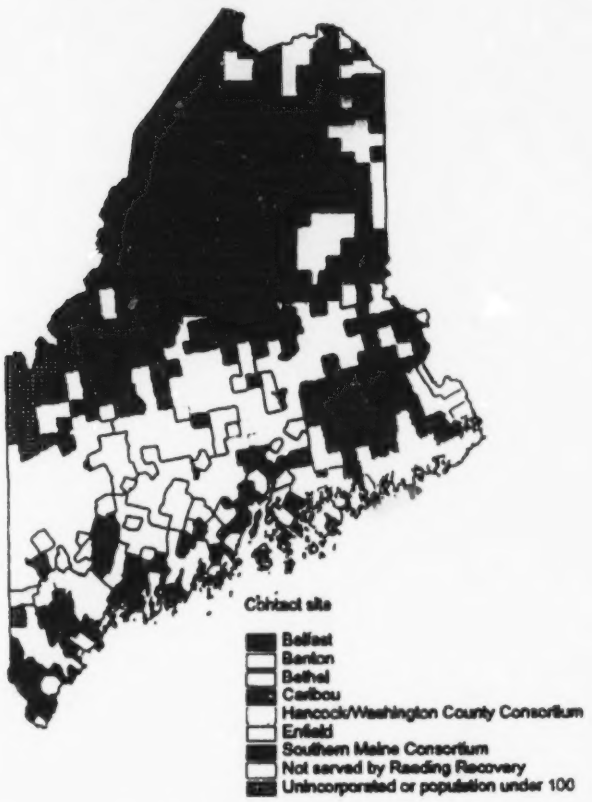
State of Maine Reading Recovery®

Revised Report and Evaluation 1996-1997



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State of Maine
Reading Recovery®

Revised Report and Evaluation
1996-1997

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Forward

Program evaluation for Reading Recovery in Maine is on-going and dynamic. Information gained from evaluation is used to continually improve implementation of the program, as well as to generate additional evaluation questions. This report summarizes statewide findings about the program based on data from the 1996-1997 school year.

This document is organized topically into brief sections, each one reporting on a different aspect of the program. The information presented includes a brief history of the Reading Recovery program in Maine, school-level implementation of the program, demographic information about the children served, the amount of time children spent in the program, program outcomes, literacy achievement over the first grade year, and information about classroom teachers' professional development in early literacy. At the end of the report, the Statewide Program Coordinator and Trainer of Teacher Leaders gives her recommendations, based on the findings presented, for the future success of the program.

Revisions

The revised report differs from the original only where the carried-over children are concerned. After the initial report was published, additional data on these children were received that compelled the authors to reassess the outcome of this subgroup of program children.

Executive Summary

- **The Reading Recovery program continued to grow in Maine in 1996-1997.** Two hundred forty-eight (248) more children were served in 1996-1997 than in 1995-1996. This year, 1957 children were served by the program in elementary schools in Maine.

- **Over half (56%) of eligible children statewide were served.** Not all schools in Maine have adopted the Reading Recovery program.

- **Statewide, 47% of children who participated in Reading Recovery (even if they only received a single lesson) successfully discontinued. Almost two thirds (64%) of the children who received a full Reading Recovery program discontinued.** There are a variety of reasons why some children do not discontinue. Some children require a much longer intervention than Reading Recovery can provide. Other children make significant gains in learning, but they still do not reach a performance level equal to typical peers in their schools.

- **Discontinued Reading Recovery children make large gains in reading and writing skills over the year.** Their learning gains are larger than those of not-at-risk random sample students.

- **Nearly all (between 72% and 92%) discontinued Reading Recovery children met or exceeded statewide average bands on measures of literacy skill by the end of the school year.** This is notable for two reasons. First, these children were all identified as at risk for literacy failure at the beginning of the year. Second, no other group of children (Random Sample, Waiting List, or Not Discontinued) demonstrated such consistency of skill levels at year-end testing.

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Reading Recovery in Maine, 1996-1997

Reading Recovery is an early intervention program for first graders at risk for literacy failure. The program targets the lowest text readers and writers in each first grade classroom. It involves an intensive one-on-one session between the at-risk child and the Reading Recovery teacher for 30 minutes a day, five days a week. The extra instruction is short-term; students are released from the program as soon as they have achieved or surpassed the average literacy level of the other first graders in the class. The philosophy behind Reading Recovery is that by solving reading difficulties early on, students who would have floundered in school due to literacy difficulties will be able to succeed, since nearly all school subjects require a foundation of reading and writing. Reading Recovery teachers study literacy learning intensely for a year as part of their specialized training.

Marie M. Clay conducted observational research in the mid 1960s that enabled her to design techniques for detecting children's early reading and writing difficulties. In the mid 1970s, she developed Reading Recovery procedures with teachers and tested the program in New Zealand. The success of this pilot program led to the nationwide adoption of Reading Recovery in New Zealand in the early 1980s. In 1984, the success of the program in New Zealand led researchers at the Ohio State University to introduce Reading Recovery to the United States.

In February of 1990, Kathryn Manning of the Maine State Department of Education organized a group of 26 Maine educators to go to Ohio to see Reading Recovery teacher training in action and attend the conference. In 1990-1991 and 1991-1992, three Maine professionals trained at Universities outside of Maine to be Teacher Leaders. In 1991, Paula Moore was sent by the University of Maine to New Zealand to train as a university Trainer of Teacher Leaders. Additional Teacher Leaders have been trained in Maine by Moore. Those Teacher Leaders, in turn, train Reading Recovery teachers who work in schools across the state.

Progressive statewide program evaluation of the program began in the fall of 1995 by the Maine Department of Education. The program evaluation for Reading Recovery in Maine is progressive for two reasons. First, the responsibilities for evaluation are assumed by a full-time researcher. This allows thorough, objective evaluations to be conducted of the program. The second reason is that evaluations are dynamic. The researcher in charge of program evaluation is in frequent contact with Reading Recovery professionals. Information gathered from investigations can be utilized quickly to improve the program. Similarly, questions about program outcomes and processes can be framed as research questions and addressed. The full-time program evaluator works out of the University of Maine College of Education and Human Development.

About the Data

Data are collected on three groups of children:

- **Reading Recovery children** are children who have had at least one Reading Recovery lesson. Some children who are identified as needing services do not start Reading Recovery immediately, due to insufficient resources (i.e., limited Reading Recovery teacher time).

    - The children with the greatest needs are always started first. (These children are called **first round Reading Recovery children**.) As each child is either discontinued or referred to another program for long term help, a space is available for the next first grade child most in need.

    - Children who start the program after another child has exited are called **second round Reading Recovery children**.

- Reading Recovery first serves the children with the greatest needs in reading and writing. In the fall testing, some children who are identified as needing Reading Recovery, but who are not the very lowest text readers and writers, are considered to be "waiting" for a slot in the Reading Recovery program.

  A **Waiting List child** is one who was considered at-risk in the fall and who is still at-risk in end-of-year testing, because the school lacked adequate Reading Recovery resources to serve the child. If "waiting" children made sufficient progress in the regular classroom program and were no longer considered by the school to be "waiting" for Reading Recovery, their scores were not included in the **Waiting List** group, and thus not used in the program evaluation.

- **Random Sample children** are sampled from the population of children in each first grade class for whom Reading Recovery was not indicated. Essentially, these children represent the top 80% of each first grade class. The goal of Reading Recovery is to accelerate the bottom 20% of students so that their literacy skills are at the average level of students from this top 80%. Consequently, random sample children are also a valuable comparison group for Reading Recovery children.

The Observation Survey

Six measures are used to assess literacy skills for the three groups of first grade children (Reading Recovery, Waiting List, and Random Sample):

- **Text Reading Level** represents the highest book in a series, ranked for difficulty, that the child can read with 90% accuracy. Standardized levels range from 0[1] to 30 (about a sixth-grade reading level).

- On the **Writing Vocabulary** test, children write down all the words they know how to write in ten minutes. Each correct word, including the child's own name, is counted as a point. If the child can't think of any words, the examiner follows a standardized list of prompts to assess the child's control over high frequency words, family names, color names, etc.

- For the **Hearing and Recording Sounds (HRS)** test, or "dictation", a sentence is read to the child, and he or she is asked to write the words. The test measures the child's ability to analyze words for sounds. Every sound represented correctly is scored as a point.

- The **Ohio Word Test** asks children to read a list of 20 high-frequency words. The child's score indicates the number of words read correctly.

- The **Concepts About Print** assessment in the Observation Survey measures a group of behaviors that reveal what children understand about the conventions of written language. The assessment comprises twenty-four items and performance is measured by number of items correct.

- The **Letter Identification** task includes all lower and upper case letters as well as the literary g and a on a page of randomly arranged letters. Children are given credit for a correct response if they name the letter, give the letter sound, or name a word that starts with the letter. The maximum score on this assessment is 54.

These six measures were taken both in the fall and in the spring, so the progress of all three groups can be compared. The measures were also taken at entry into and exit from the Reading Recovery program.

It should be noted that Text Reading Level, the Ohio Word Test, HRS, Concepts About Print, and the Letter Identification task all have ceilings. For example, the highest score a child can get on the Ohio word test is 20. This was not a problem in the fall, when few if any children received the highest possible scores on these three measures. However, at spring testing, some children from all groups reached these ceilings. Therefore it is unclear how much higher some scores would have been without these constraints. While the Writing Vocabulary test does not have an explicit ceiling, the highest score a child can receive is constrained by the ten minute time limit.

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[1]The lowest level, Level A, is the inability to read "No, no, no," in the lowest level book. A child at Level B can read "No, no, no," but cannot read the next level of text, a Level 1. Both Levels A and B are represented as 0 in the Reading Recovery data.

Implementation

Every year since its adoption in 1991-1992, the Reading Recovery program has grown in Maine. Two hundred forty-eight (248) more children were served in 1996-1997 than in 1995-1996. In 1996-1997, the Reading Recovery program in Maine served 1957 children. Based on the estimate that 20% of children are at risk for literacy difficulties, Maine served over half (56%) of its eligible first graders in 1996-1997. Figure 1 shows the numbers of children served each year since the program's initial implementation in Maine and the estimated number of at-risk children. The estimated numbers of at-risk children are based on 1996-1997 enrollment data. Table 1 shows the calculation of this estimate for the 1996-1997 school year.

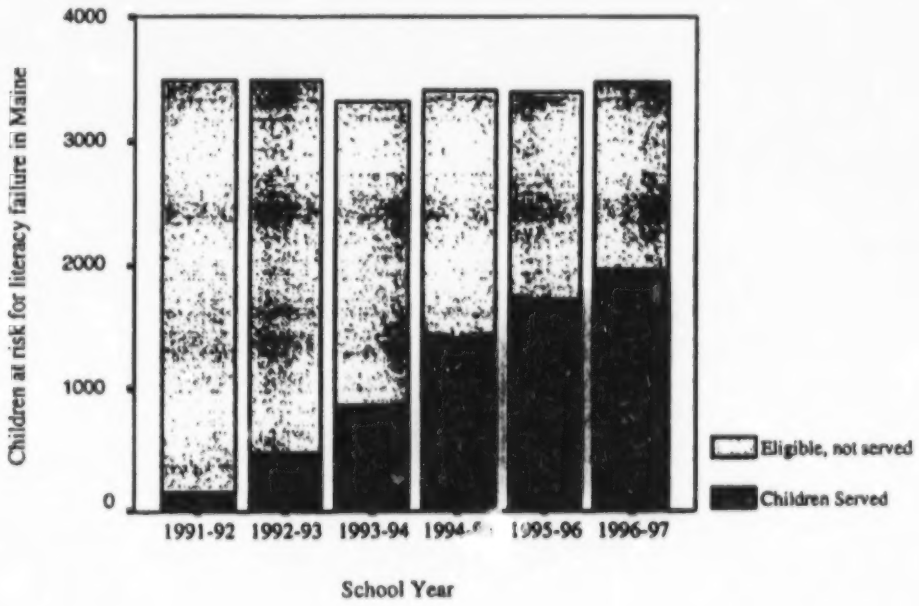

Figure 1. Children served since 1991, and the estimated number not served.

Table 1.
Estimated Number of First Graders in Maine Eligible for Reading Recovery and the Number Served, 1996-1997

First Graders, 1996-1997 (enrolled in public school)	Estimated Number Eligible for Reading Recovery (20%)	Number Served, 1996-1997
17,355	3471	1957 (56%)

Children Served

Table 2 displays the gender, lunch cost (one measure of socio-economic status), and race of children served through Reading Recovery in 1996-1997. There are more boys (64%) than girls (36%) in Reading Recovery compared with other first graders not judged to require Reading Recovery. Looking at lunch cost, the Reading Recovery children tend to be less economically advantaged than children not eligible for the program. The majority of Reading Recovery children having reduced or free lunches while the majority of children not judged to require Reading Recovery have regular lunch cost. Note, however, that Reading Recovery serves both boys and girls from all socio-economic strata. It should also be noted that the data below are only representative of the children for whom information was available *.

Table 2.
Characteristics of Children in the Program, 1996-1997

	First Graders	
	Reading Recovery	Others
Boys	64%	44%
Girls	36%	56%
Lunch Cost Free*	36%	22%
Lunch Cost Reduced*	6%	8%
Lunch Cost Regular*	30%	46%
Native American	3%	2%
White, Not Hispanic	94%	96%
Black, Not Hispanic	2%	1%
Asian or Pacific Islander	1%	1%
Hispanic	1%	1%

*Based on children from whom information was available, 72% of Reading Recovery children and 75% of others.

Geographic Distribution

In the first six years of the program, Reading Recovery has spread to nearly all regions of Maine. Figure 2 displays a map of Maine, with towns that offer Reading Recovery to their children shaded black. Grey areas indicate unincorporated areas or areas with very low population density.

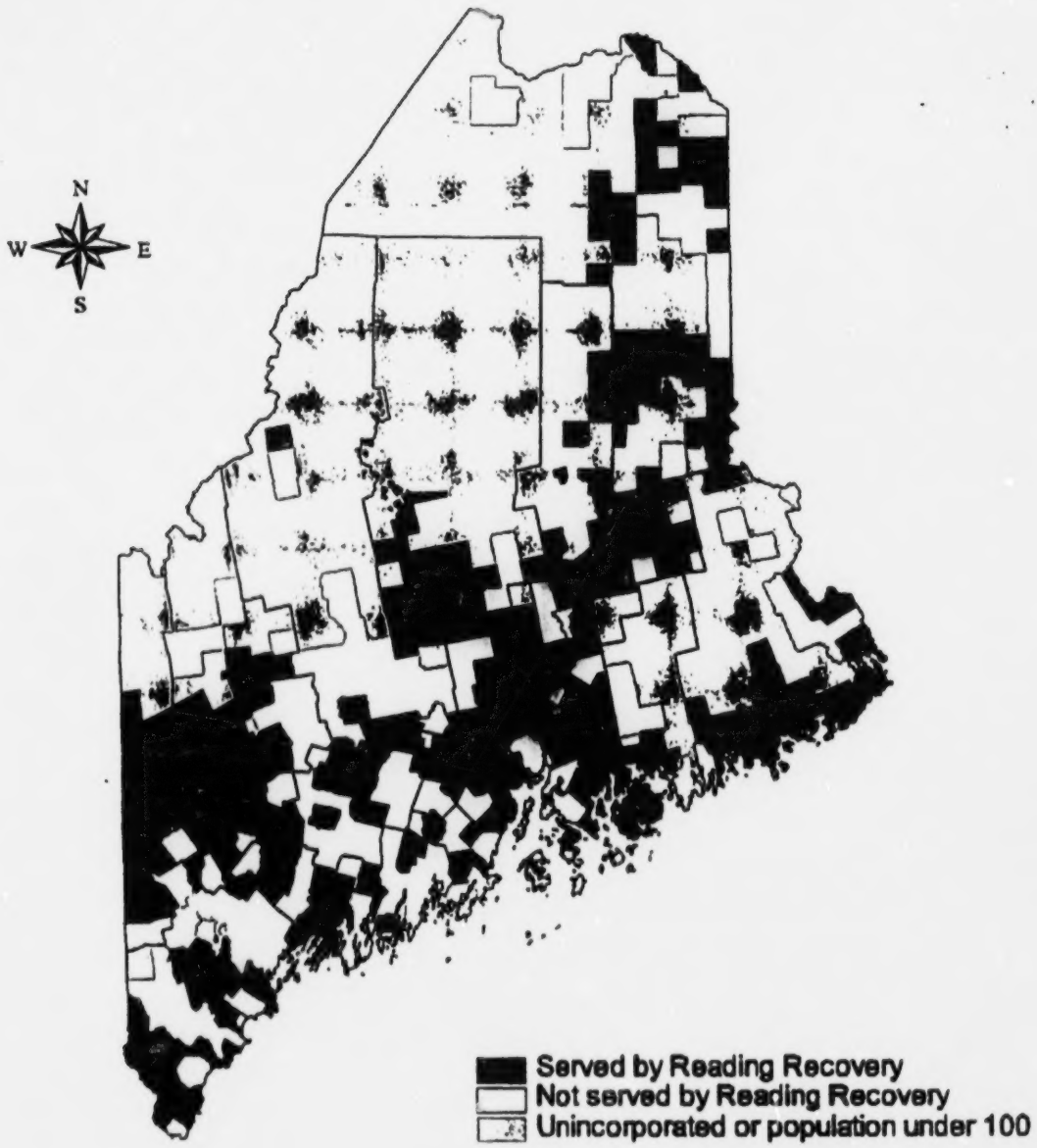

Figure 2. Reading Recovery in Maine, 1996-1997.

Program Outcomes

Of the 1957 children who participated in the Reading Recovery program in 1996-1997, 895 (46%) successfully discontinued from the program during the 1996-1997 school year. Some children's services were carried over into the summer or the fall of second grade. Their data are reported in the following pages. Three hundred fifteen (315, 16% of the total) were referred for long-term specialist help (not necessarily special education). Referral happens when the school team, in consultation with the Teacher Leader, decides that the child will benefit more from a different program. Of the 315 children referred, 193 (10% of the total) were referred after receiving at least 60 lessons, 122 (6% of the total) received fewer than 60 lessons before they were referred[2]; and 741 children (38% of the total) were neither discontinued from the program nor referred. Four hundred sixteen (416, 21% of the total) had received fewer than 60 lessons, and 325 (17% of the total) had received at least 60 lessons. Reading Recovery did not continue for them because the school year ended. These children are considered to be still in the program. The status of the remaining six children was unavailable. Figure 3 illustrates the program outcomes for 1951of the 1957 Reading Recovery children.

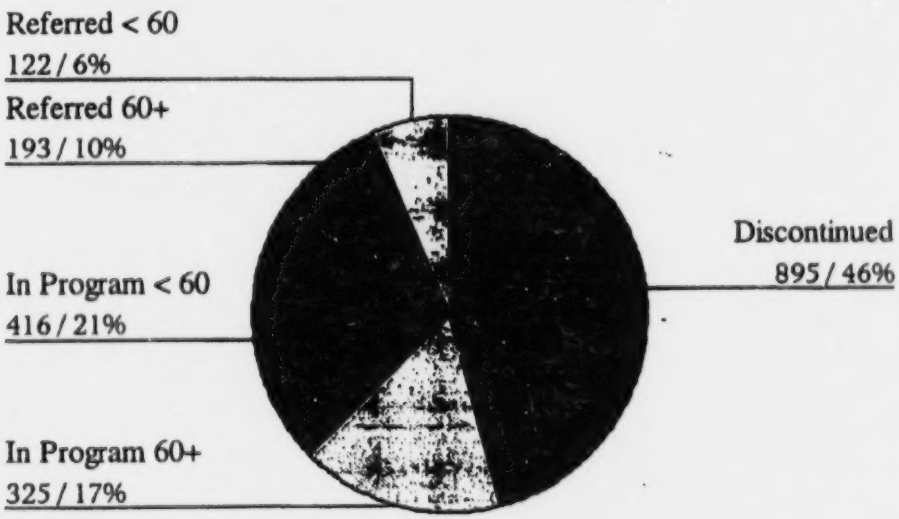

Figure 3. End of program status for Reading Recovery children, 1996-1997.

[2]Sixty lessons is the estimated time that the average Reading Recovery child should take to successfully discontinue, based on the data from New Zealand where the program was originally adopted.

Data Limitations

- The percentage (46%) of children who successfully discontinued during the first grade is lower than in previous years. One reason for this might be that many schools are deferring referrals to special education until second grade; therefore, Reading Recovery teachers are picking up some children for whom the program was not designed, and their data have been included. These children, of course, would be less likely to benefit from the program.

- Many schools are under implemented in Reading Recovery; therefore, the Reading Recovery teachers are only serving the very lowest children. Contrarily, some small, rural schools are over implemented, and there is no urgency to discontinue children. Also, some schools are serving some children with Reading Recovery and another intervention.

- Another limitation of the data is the unknown variety of reasons for referring children. In subsequent years, more data will be collected in order to learn whether or not they were referred to special education or Title 1, and whether the children referred to special education were referred for reading or writing or for other reasons, such as behavior.

Carried-Over Children

This year, in an effort to improve outcomes for children who are still in the program, a handful of schools planned to carry 131 children's Reading Recovery programs over into summer or the following fall. However, data were received for only 46 children. Figure 4 illustrates that 34, or 74% of these children were discontinued after receiving an average of 37 additional lessons, 15% were still in the program (the majority had over 60 lessons), and 11% were referred after receiving at least 60 lessons. It is unknown if the remaining 85 children received any carried-over services.

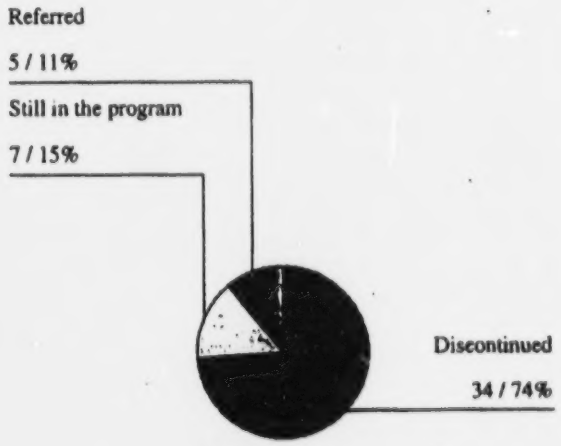

Figure 4. End of program status for carried-over Reading Recovery children, 1996-1997.

Time in the Program

Because each second round child cannot start the program until a first round child has been discontinued (or referred), discontinuing first round children sooner gives second round children more time to discontinue themselves. Figure 5 shows the number of children who discontinued in each month.

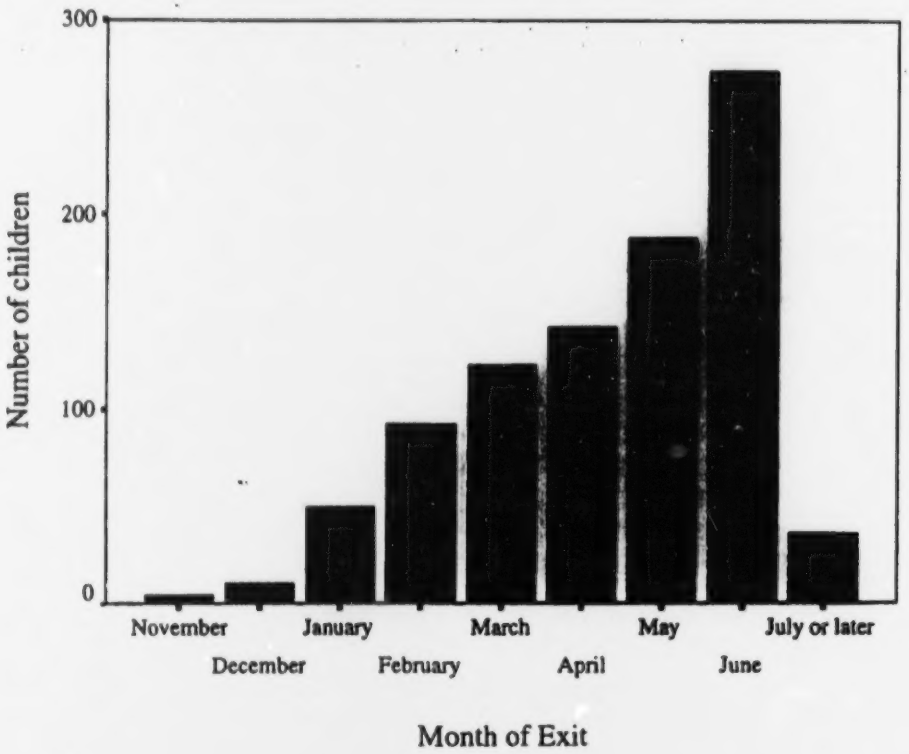

Figure 5. Number of children discontinuing each month.

As shown in Figure 5, many children discontinued in April, May and June, with fewer discontinuing in January, February, and March. Forty-seven percent (47%) of children in Maine who discontinued from Reading Recovery in 1996-1997 did so by the end of April. Fourteen of these children are not included in Figure 5 because it is not known in which month between September and April they discontinued. Note that a small number of children discontinued after the end of June. In some schools, children still in the program at the end of the year were carried over into the summer or the fall of their second grade year.

Criterion-Referenced Measures of Achievement

Table 3 gives average scores on the Observation Survey, in both the fall and the spring, for Random Sample children and Reading Recovery children. The Reading Recovery children are shown in three categories: those who have successfully discontinued, those who have been referred, and those who are still in Reading Recovery at the end of the year. The average scores (means) are listed for each, and the standard deviations are listed underneath each in parentheses. Note that the average fall scores of Reading Recovery children are much lower than the Random Sample on all six measures. By spring, however, as expected, the average scores of discontinued children have increased to approach the level of the Random Sample group.

Table 3.
First Graders' Fall and Spring Mean Scores and Standard Deviations

		Random Sample	Discontinued from program	Referred	Still in program at year end
Text Reading Level	Fall	4.2 (5.7)	0.7 (1.1)	0.6 (1.3)	0.7 (1.0)
	Spring	20.9 (7.4)	19.0 (3.7)	6.3 (4.4)	9.9 (3.7)
Writing Vocabulary	Fall	15.7 (9.2)	5.2 (4.1)	3.4 (4.5)	4.5 (3.5)
	Spring	49.8 (15.7)	49.9 (11.4)	29.1 (13.1)	38.1 (10.9)
HRS	Fall	22.5 (8.7)	8.4 (6.9)	4.6 (6.3)	7.1 (6.2)
	Spring	35.3 (2.8)	35.6 (1.5)	27.9 (7.6)	33.1 (3.9)
Ohio Word Test	Fall	5.2 (5.7)	0.5 (1.4)	0.4 (1.7)	0.4 (1.1)
	Spring	18.4 (2.8)	18.3 (1.6)	10.2 (5.5)	14.3 (4.1)
Concepts About Print	Fall	14.9 (3.1)	10.8 (3.3)	9.2 (3.6)	10.4 (3.5)
	Spring	20.4 (2.5)	21.1 (1.9)	17.4 (3.0)	19.1 (2.3)
Letter Identification	Fall	50.2 (5.8)	38.7 (10.6)	27.1 (13.3)	35.4 (12.2)
	Spring	53.4 (2.2)	53.2 (2.3)	50.2 (5.6)	52.5 (2.0)

Accelerated Progress of Reading Recovery children

In order to catch up to their peers, Reading Recovery children need to make accelerated progress in all areas of literacy skills because their scores in the fall are so much lower than the scores of a random sample of their peers. Table 4 depicts this progress in the form of gain scores. A gain score is simply a child's spring score minus his or her fall score. All children learn over the course of a year. A gain score is a way of measuring how much a child has progressed. Note that in order to reach the same levels of literacy skills, Reading Recovery children must have larger gain scores than their peers in the Random Sample group. It should be kept in mind, however, that ceiling effects occur in some of the measures (e.g, HRS, Ohio Word Test, Concepts About Print, and Letter ID). In other words, children with high fall scores are constrained somewhat in terms of the gains they can make, since the measures may not reach the high ends of some children's literacy skills. Table 4 shows that the discontinued Reading Recovery children indeed have higher gain scores than the Random Sample group.

Table 4.
Average Gain Scores from Fall testing to Spring testing on the Observation Survey

Observation Survey Test	First Graders in Maine			
	Random Sample	Discontinued	Referred	Still In Program (at the end of the school year)
Text Reading Gain	16.7	18.3	5.7	9.2
Writing Vocabulary Gain	33.9	44.2	25.5	33.0
HRS Gain	12.6	27.1	23.3	25.6
Ohio Word Test Gain	13.2	17.8	9.7	14.0
Concepts About Print	5.4	10.1	8.2	8.5
Letter Identification	3.1	14.2	22.7	16.6

Figures 6 - 11 illustrate the gains made by children over the course of the year on the six assessments of the Observation Survey. Differences between the means, or the gain scores, for the fall versus spring tests illustrate the different rates of progress that were attained in each group. Note that because the data in Figures 6 - 11 represent mean scores, or the average scores of each group, ***between group*** differences are emphasized. ***Within groups***, there is considerable variation from these group means.

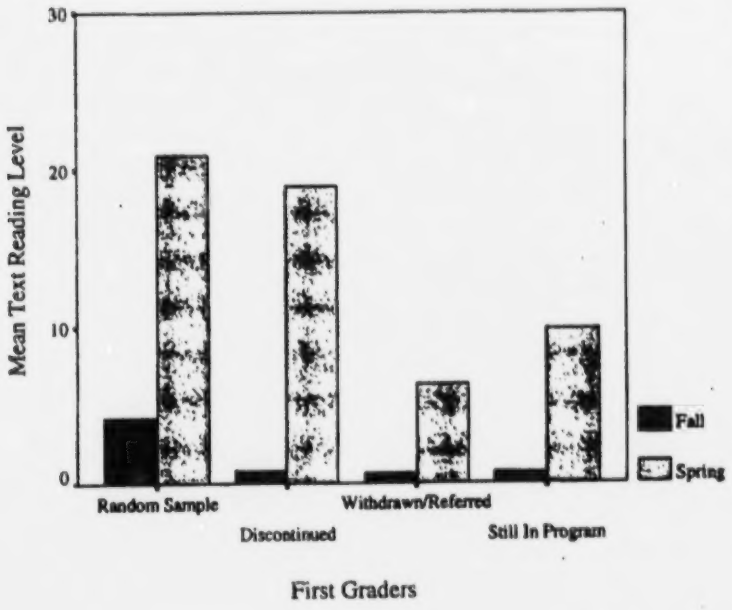

Figure 6. Progress of children on Text Reading Level over the year.

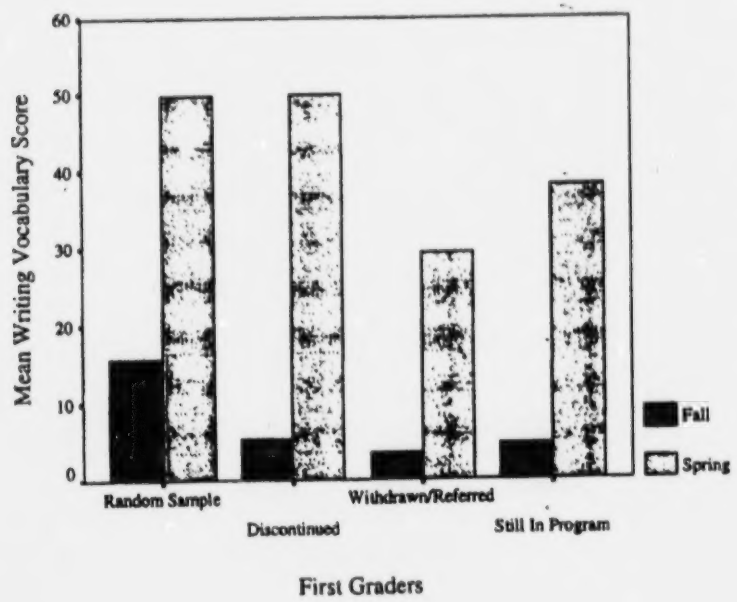

Figure 7. Progress of children on Writing Vocabulary over the year.

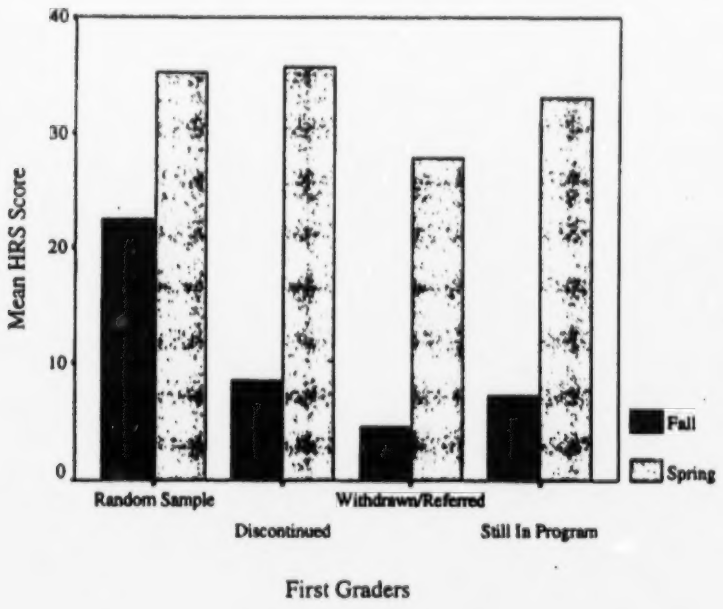

Figure 8. Progress of children on Hearing and Recording Sounds over the year.

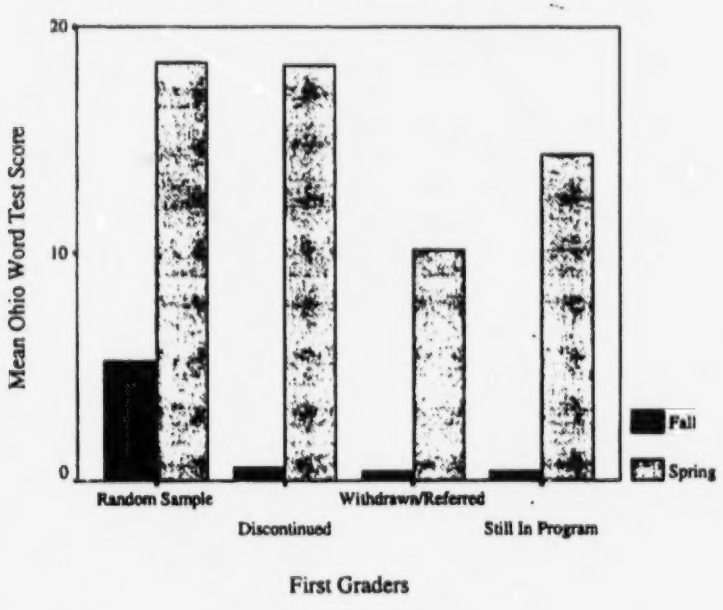

Figure 9. Progress of children on the Ohio Word Test over the year.

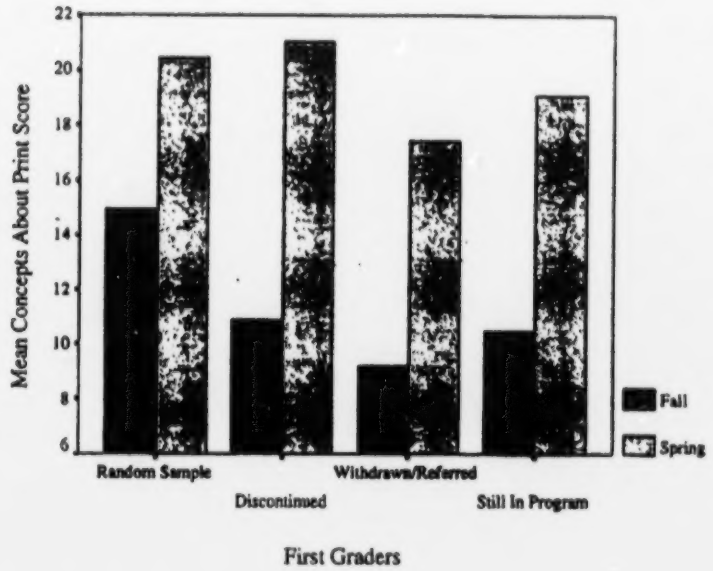

Figure 10. Progress of children on the Concepts About Print test over the year.

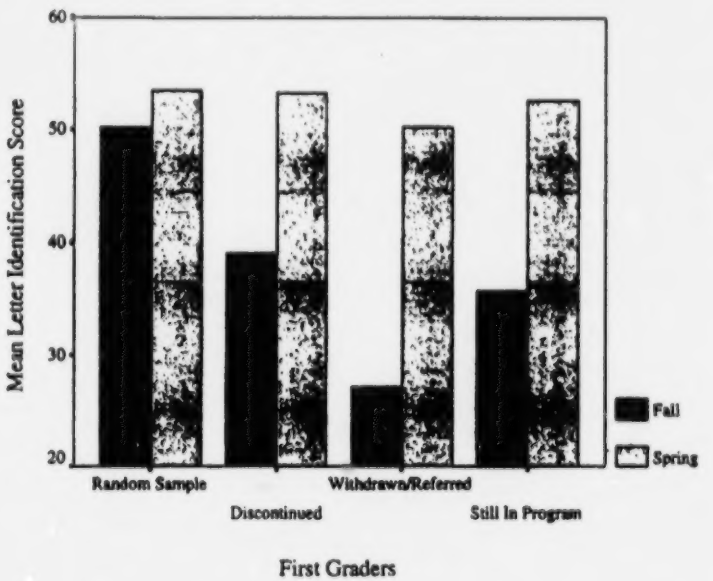

Figure 11. Progress of children on the Letter Identification test over the year.

In order for Reading Recovery to be effective, learning must continue after children are released from the program. Figure 12 illustrates this continued progress. Children who were discontinued prior to April 20th continued to gain text reading levels for the remainder of the year.

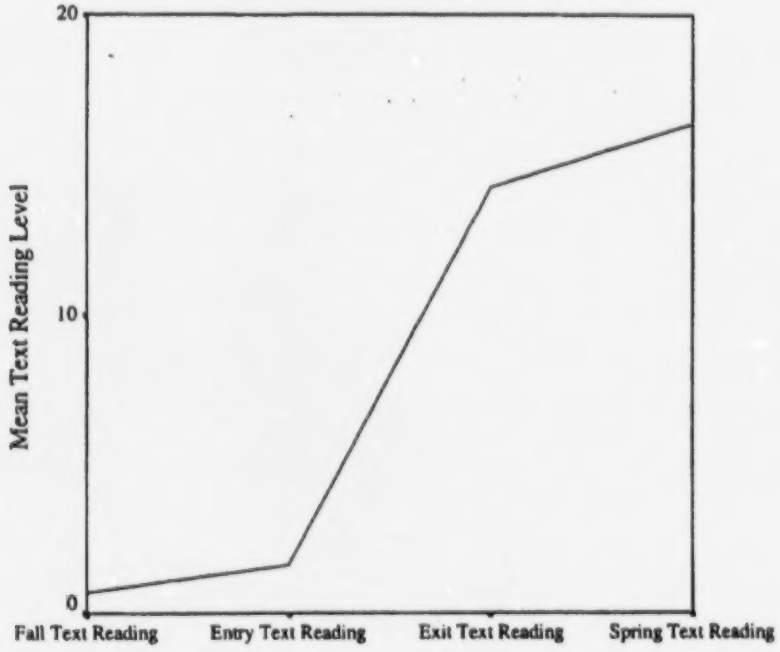

Figure 12. Text Reading progress of children discontinued by April 20.

Norm Referenced Measures of Achievement

Because Reading Recovery aims to bring previously low-achieving children up to the skill levels of their classmates, norm-referenced assessment is an important component of evaluation. The target point for Reading Recovery children's literacy skills is the average level of performance of their non-Reading Recovery peers.

Specifically, an "average band" is computed as a target for the performance of Reading Recovery children by adding and subtracting ½ of a standard deviation unit from the Random Sample students' mean score. The components that go into the computation of the average bands for four tests of the Observation Survey are shown in Table 5. For example, the average score on text reading for the Random Sample students was 20.89, with a standard deviation of 7.39. When ½ of 7.39 is *subtracted from* 20.89, the lower end for the average band, or 17.20, is the result. When ½ of 7.39 is *added to* 20.89, 24.59 is the result, and this is the upper end for that average band. For example, looking at Text Reading, any child whose spring Text Reading Level score is 18, 20, 22, or 24 (the only possible scores between 17.20 and 24.59), is said to have scored within the average band.

Table 5.
Statewide Average Bands of Spring Scores

Observation Survey Test	Mean	Standard Deviation	Average Band		
Text Reading Level	20.89	7.39	17.20	-	24.59
Writing Vocabulary	49.79	15.73	41.93	-	57.66
HRS	35.27	2.85	33.85	-	36.70
Ohio Word Test	18.43	2.85	17.01	-	19.86
Concepts About Print	20.44	2.52	19.18	-	21.70
Letter Identification	53.43	2.23	52.32	-	54.55

Table 6 shows the percentages of first grade children who scored below, within, or above the spring statewide average bands at spring testing. Notice the percentages of discontinued children whose skills are within or above the average band. This is the target range for their skills. Even though many discontinued several months before these spring scores were taken, the majority were within or above these average bands at spring testing.

Table 6.
Percentages of First Grade Children Below, Within, and Above Spring Statewide Average Bands, 1996-1997

	Random Sample	Discontinued	Waiting List	Not Discontinued
Text Reading				
Below	27%	28%	76%	97%
Within	41%	66%	19%	3%
Above	32%	6%	5%	0%
Writing Vocabulary				
Below	29%	23%	60%	69%
Within	43%	52%	31%	28%
Above	27%	25%	9%	3%
HRS				
Below	15%	8%	40%	51%
Within	46%	59%	43%	43%
Above	39%	33%	17%	6%
Ohio Word Test				
Below	19%	26%	56%	80%
Within	31%	46%	27%	18%
Above	49%	28%	17%	3%
Concepts About Print				
Below	32%	20%	54%	61%
Within	30%	35%	30%	27%
Above	39%	45%	16%	12%
Letter Identification				
Below	13%	16%	27%	45%
Within	87%	84%	73%	55%

Carried-Over Children

Data update forms were returned on 46 children whose programs were carried over into the summer or the fall of second grade. These forms provided information on the amount of additional lessons needed, new status, and exit test scores. Table 7 illustrates the average scores among the carried-over children.

Table 7.
Average Exit Scores of Carried-Over Children, 1996-1997

Variable Name	Mean
Text Reading	19
Writing Vocabulary	53
HRS	36
Ohio Word Test	18
Concepts About Print	23
Letter Identification	54

Classroom Teachers' Professional Development

Recently an effort has been made to help smooth transitions from Reading Recovery back to the classroom. One initiative involves a course entitled "Observing Young Learners to Inform Instruction" which focuses on early literacy teaching practices for K-2 classroom teachers and special educators. Another initiative involves a trained Reading Recovery teacher instructing K-2 classroom teachers how to administer the Reading Recovery Observation Survey. In an effort to determine whether such professional development impacts children's success in the Reading Recovery program, the classroom teachers who had either form of professional development were noted. In Figure 13, percentages of children whose teachers had received either type of professional training.

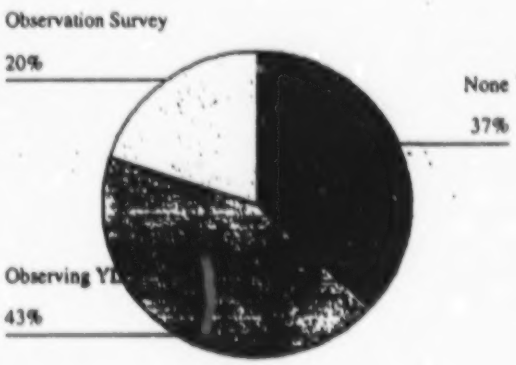

Figure 13 Percentages of Reading Recovery children whose classroom teachers received early literacy training.

Table 8 breaks down the classroom teachers' professional development in early literacy by Reading Recovery children's discontinuation status. It appears that about two thirds of the Reading Recovery children had classroom teachers who had some form of professional development. This suggests that Reading Recovery schools are making more of an effort to provide professional development opportunities for their classroom teachers. Also, children who had teachers who had some professional development appear to be discontinued or referred slightly more frequently than children who did not have classroom teachers with such training. Conversely, more children whose classroom teachers did not have professional development training were still in the program at the end of the year. This suggests that professional development training might have a small effect on children's program status. However, we did not find a significant link between increased discontinuing rates and increased classroom teacher professional development. Finally, Table 8 shows that we are achieving our goal of disseminating classroom professional development initiatives in tandem with Reading Recovery.

Table 8.
Discontinuation Rates of Children Whose Classroom Teachers Had Professional Development in Early Literacy

	Discontinued	Still in the Program	Referred
Observation Survey training	20%	19%	20%
Observing Young Learners	45%	40%	47%
Received some training	65%	59%	67%
No prof. development training	35%	42%	32%

Speech and Language Services

Data pertaining to the number of children who needed speech and language services were analyzed for 1996-1997. Figure 14 illustrates this by status. Between 51% and 62% of children referred need speech and language services. However, about 25% of the discontinued children also needed speech and language services. Therefore, need for speech and language services alone does not predict a child's subsequent status in Reading Recovery.

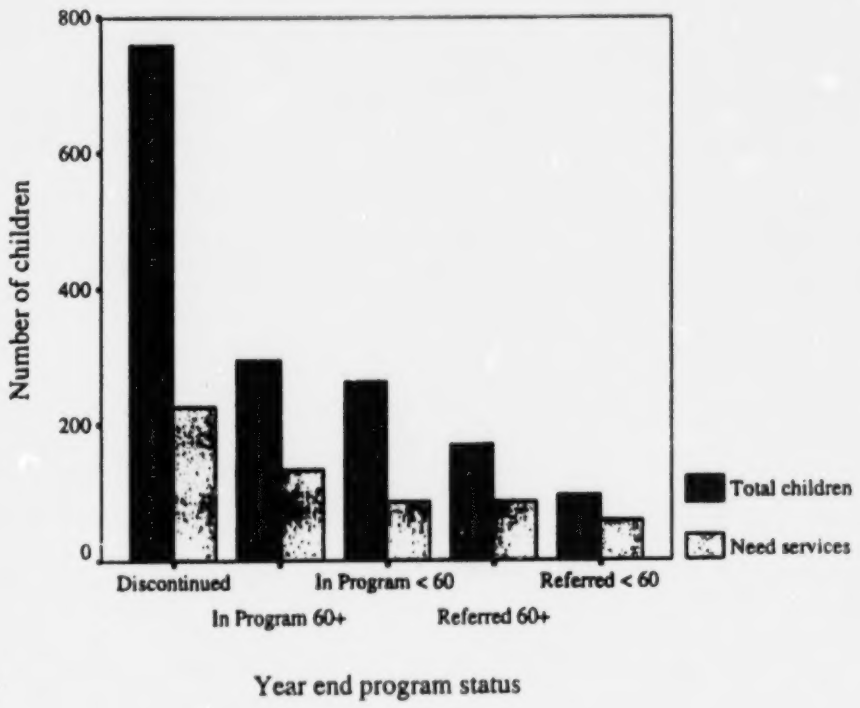

Figure 14. Number of Reading Recovery children needing speech and language services.

Program Coordinator's Conclusions

One of the strengths of Reading Recovery is that student outcomes are measured each year in an effort to assess and improve program effectiveness. The most positive finding from the 1996-1997 program evaluation data is that nearly all children (72% to 92%) who successfully discontinued from the program performed at or above the state's average band at the end of first grade on Text Reading Level. Compared to other years, this is a higher percentage of children who maintained reading gains after leaving Reading Recovery. These results confirm the soundness of a decision made by some Teacher Leaders in 1996-1997 to establish uniform benchmark text levels (14-16) for discontinuing. These levels are somewhat higher than the national average in order to ensure that Maine Reading Recovery children meet success in classrooms where Maine average reading achievement is also somewhat higher than the national norm.

However, program evaluation data for 1996-1997 also indicated that only 46% of the children served by Reading Recovery discontinued by the end of grade one. The downside of the new benchmarks for discontinuing may have been that children were kept in the program longer in order to achieve higher text levels, and fewer children achieved the higher benchmarks to discontinue.

Another area of concern in the 1996-1997 data is the high number (16%) of Reading Recovery children referred for further services. Many schools are deferring referrals to special education until second grade in order to use Reading Recovery as a pre-referral strategy. This is an appropriate use of the program. However, some schools are using Reading Recovery with some children for whom the program was not designed, such as handicapped children, and for whom we do not have research-based procedures. Unfortunately, our data do not distinguish between children who already had a special education referral before they began Reading Recovery and children who were referred for special education services after Reading Recovery.

In addition, the data do not reveal for what reasons Reading Recovery children were referred for further services. It may be that some Reading Recovery children were referred for reasons other than reading and writing, such as behavior. Finally, we do not know if children were referred to special education or to "further services" in a Title I program. In the 1997-1998 school year we will collect data on children in the referred category in order to explore these issues.

A further area of concern is that in the 1996-1997 school year, 38% of the Reading Recovery children were still in the program at the end of the year. Twenty percent of these children had not received a full program and 17% had more than sixty lessons. This is a very large number of children for whom there was no positive outcome from the Reading Recovery program; they were left in limbo. It is assumed that many of these children were served too late in the school year to complete their programs. However, while a small number of schools did carry over a portion of children in the incomplete group and finish their Reading Recovery programs in second grade, the data do not reveal what happened to the rest of the children. Again, in 1997-1998 we will collect data to try and discover what factors may be affecting the still-in-the-program status. Following, I make recommendations to improve Reading Recovery program implementation in the future.

Recommendations for Maine Program Implementation

1. It is likely that many schools in Maine are under implemented. In other words, they have too little Reading Recovery teaching slots to serve all the students who need extra help. If schools are under implemented, then they are able to serve only the very lowest children, and it can be predicted that more of these children will need long-term help. In addition, the very lowest children tend to take longer in the program, and this reduces the number of children, over all, who can be served. In our schools it may be that we need to serve more than 20% of the children, the original definition of full implementation, in order to serve all the children who need extra help. Therefore, **full implementation is now defined as having sufficient hours of trained Reading Recovery teacher time available to serve all the children defined by that school as needing the program, and that may change from year to year.**

I recommend that schools work to achieve full implementation according to the needs of the school. That may mean a school might train another Reading Recovery teacher, or free up the existing teacher to work with more children, rather than doing Title I literacy groups.

2. Some schools are choosing to use Reading Recovery with all the lowest children, including some handicapped children. Reading Recovery was designed to play a very particular role in a school system: early, short-term intervention. While it can be expected that even severely handicapped children will benefit from the individualized, one-on-one instruction in Reading Recovery, it is not expected that they will make accelerative progress. Therefore,

I recommend that schools serve children who have been clinically diagnosed with a severe handicapping condition, such as, but not limited to, profound deafness, autism, or Down's Syndrome, only under these conditions:

a) **The Reading Recovery teacher has room in her/his program and will offer a maximum of 20 weeks of instruction.**

b) **The Reading Recovery teacher makes a contract with all concerned for a specified number of weeks to get a reading and writing process started.**

c) **A special contract is made for the Reading Recovery teacher to teach for extra time outside of the usual program, using extra resources allocated for this purpose.**

d) **A special arrangement is made for the school to train an extra Reading Recovery teacher, such as a special educator.**

Data on these children will be analyzed separately from the data for regular Reading Recovery children.

3. Some schools may not be organized in an efficient way to make timely decisions about Reading Recovery children.

I recommend that:

a) **teachers observe and select children as early as possible in the school year. Some schools have found it cost-effective to have first graders brought in for observations in the summer, in the week before school starts.**

b) **school teams, consisting of Reading Recovery teachers, classroom teachers, specialists, and the principal, meet at weeks ten, sixteen, and twenty to monitor the progress of Reading Recovery children and adjust team efforts.**

c) **school teams, in consultation with a Teacher Leader, use twenty calendar weeks as a benchmark for making referral decisions about children who are not making accelerative progress. Twenty weeks is about half-way through the school year, and this would give a second-round child time to finish the program.**

d) **a school team work hard to balance the needs of any individual student with the needs of <u>all</u> students who may need the program.**

4. We must reduce the number of children who end the school year with incomplete programs. Bringing a school up to full implementation will help ensure there are adequate resources to serve all the children who need help. In addition, selecting children appropriately and being organized to efficiently deliver the program will increase the chances that second-round children will get through the program. However, it is likely that we will always have some children who do not have adequate time in the school year to finish Reading Recovery.

I recommend that schools carry over children into second grade if they have not received a complete program in first grade. Some schools have been piloting this policy and are very pleased. The Maine Teacher Leader Team, in collaboration with Blair Koefoed, a New Zealand trainer, prepared a list of guidelines to help school teams ensure the success of carrying children over:

Consult with a Teacher Leader to assess the potential effectiveness of carrying children over in your school context.

Consider carrying children over only if your school meets the new definition of fully implemented.

Carry over no more than two children per Reading Recovery teacher.

Carefully select the children to be carried over. Consider how many weeks a potential carry-over child has already completed in the program and the child's Text Reading Level at the end of grade one.

For example, you would <u>not</u> carry over a child who has already received sixteen weeks of the program but is only reading at text level eight. This child is not making accelerated progress and would still be too far out of step with entering grade two achievement (text levels 18-20) to make carrying over an effective option.

Begin the carried-over children's programs by administering the Observation Survey and Roaming Around the Known. Research indicates that carried-over children, like regular Reading Recovery children, make accelerated progress when they are fluent and flexible with what they already know.

Teach hard to ensure that carried-over children are discontinued by November or December.

Meet regularly with the second grade teachers to ensure the carried-over children are transferring reading and writing skills to the second grade program.

Discontinue children when they have achieved a self-extending system (at least text level 18) and there is an appropriate classroom group where they can continue to learn just from classroom instruction. It may be unrealistic to expect carried-over children to achieve average of the class at the second grade level as text difficulty levels rise steeply.

Assess the effectiveness of carrying children over with your school team at a regularly scheduled team meeting. You will want to ensure that your school team continues to be committed to Reading Recovery as a short-term, accelerative, first grade intervention.

Please submit data on carried-over children as outlined by your Teacher Leader so we can assess the effectiveness on a State basis.

The Teacher Leader Team sought Marie Clay's advice about carrying over children in our Maine context. This is what she told us:

> *I have been advocating this shift and am pleased to see it occurring. One thing that must not happen is a relaxing of the imperative to get children through the programme in the shortest time - through and out into the classroom, preferably before they get to Grade 2.*
>
> Marie Clay, e-mail communication, 3/12/98

State of Maine
Reading Recovery®
Revised Report and Evaluation
1996-1997 Supplement:
Carried-over Children

University of Maine

Center for Early Literacy

Conducted and Prepared by
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Center for Early Literacy
College of Education and Human Development

Funding for evaluation and reporting provided by the
Maine Department of Education

Forward

A decision was made in 1996-1997 to carry the Reading Recovery program of some children into the summer or the fall of second grade. There are various reasons why these children are still in the program at the end of the school year. Since many of them started the program as second round children, they would not have received their first Reading Recovery lesson until late winter or the early spring of their first grade year. Thus, for most of them, the school year ended before they had a chance to complete the program. This is the first report to focus solely on the progress of such "carried-over" children. The number of children in the analysis is small. However, the framework of this report may serve as a template for the analysis of carried-over children in subsequent years.

Revisions

After the initial carried-over children's report was published, additional data were received that compelled the authors to reassess the outcome of this subgroup of program children.

Executive Summary

- **In 1996-1997, Reading Recovery teachers reported that 131 children would be carried over into the summer or following fall.** However, data were received for only 46 of these children, and thus, this report is based only on this small sample size of 46. Specific guidelines will be set for the procedure of carrying over children and reporting on their progress in the 1997-1998 school year.

- **Almost three-quarters (74%) of the children whose Reading Recovery programs were carried over into the summer or following fall successfully discontinued.** This percentage is a bit lower than expected. It will likely increase in subsequent years as the procedures for selecting and carrying over children become more routinized.

- **Eighty percent (80%) of the carried-over children who received a full Reading Recovery program discontinued.** A full program is defined as at least 60 lessons, or having successfully completed the program, i.e., discontinuing.

- **Discontinued Reading Recovery carried-over children made large gains in reading and writing skills from first grade spring testing to testing at the time of exiting the program.** It is expected that if Reading Recovery resources had been available to these children earlier in their first grade year, their gains would have been evident at spring testing. However, most of the children had the majority of their program *after* spring testing, and in many cases, into the second grade year.

- **Carried-over children had an average of 35 additional lessons. Carried-over children who discontinued required an average of 37 additional lessons. They typically ended first grade at text reading level 11 and discontinued at a text reading level 21.** Carried-over children who did not discontinue received an average of 38 additional lessons and typically ended first grade at a text reading level of just 9. Most likely these children should not have been selected to be carried over as there was evidence that they were not able to make accelerated progress even at the end of first grade.

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Children Served

Table 1 displays the gender, lunch cost (one measure of socio-economic status), and race of carried-over children served through Reading Recovery in 1996-1997. There are more boys (54%) than girls (46%) in the carried-over group. Looking at lunch cost, it appears that the majority of the Reading Recovery carried-over children have free lunches. Note, however, that Reading Recovery serves both boys and girls from all socio-economic strata. It should also be noted that the data below is only representative of the children for whom information was available *.

Table 1.
Characteristics of Children in the Program, 1996-1997

	Carried-Over Children
Boys	54%
Girls	46%
Lunch Cost Free*	33%
Lunch Cost Reduced*	0%
Lunch Cost Regular*	28%
White, Not Hispanic	100%

*Based on 61% of carried-over children for whom information was available.

Program Outcomes

This year, in an effort to improve outcomes for children who are still in the program, a handful of schools planned to carry 131 children's Reading Recovery programs over into summer or the following fall. However, data were received for only 46 children. Figure 1 illustrates that 34, or 74% of these children, were discontinued after receiving an average of 37 additional lessons, 15% were still in the program, and 11% were referred after receiving at least 60 lessons. It is unknown if the remaining 85 children received any carried-over services as had been planned.

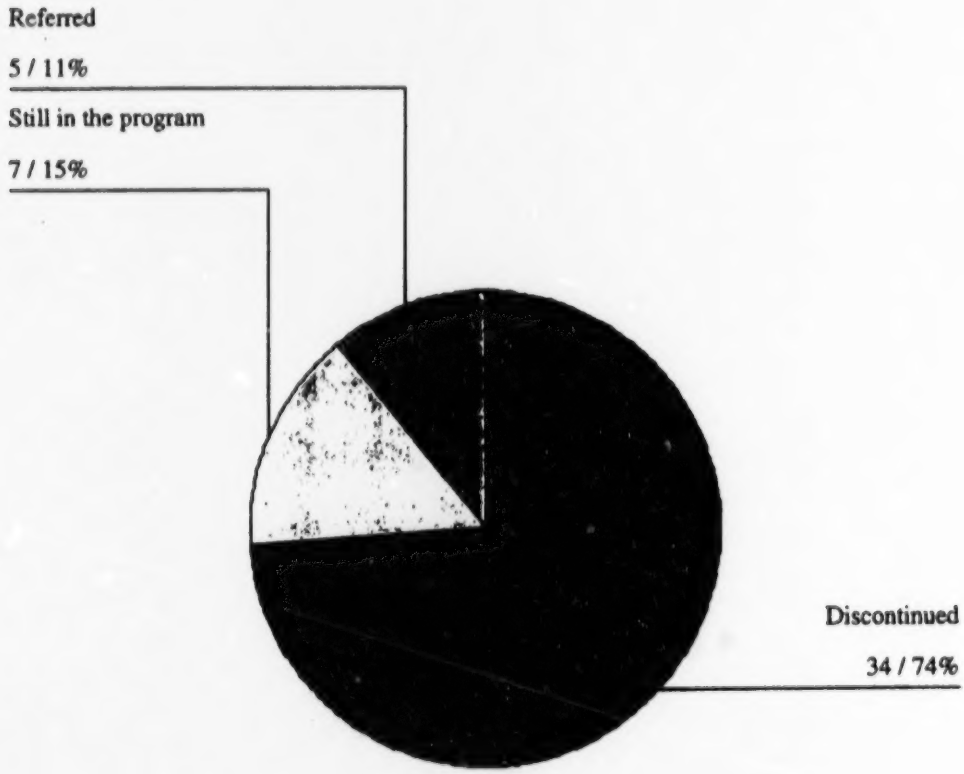

Figure 1. End of program status for carried-over Reading Recovery children, 1996-1997.

Time in the Program

Carried-over children received an average of 35 additional Reading Recovery lessons. Table 2 shows the mean, median, mode, and range for (a) the number of lessons received and weeks in Reading Recovery during the first grade year, (b) additional lessons and weeks as carried-over children, and (c) the total number of lessons and weeks in the Reading Recovery program.

Table 2.
Carried-Over Children's Time in the Program

	During first grade year	Additional: In summer or following fall	In total
Number of lessons			
Mean	30	35	65
Median	26	35	64
Mode	30, 31	39	59, 60
Range	0-117	11-72	12-134
Number of weeks			
Mean	10	10	20
Median	10	10	20
Mode	4	4	22
Range	2-36	4-22	4-40

Table 2 shows that carried-over children received anywhere from 0 to 117, or a mean of 30 Reading Recovery lessons prior to being carried over. During the summer or following fall they received anywhere between 11 and 72, or a mean of 35 lessons, and in total they received anywhere from 12 to 134, or a mean of 65 lessons. This is in tandem with the estimated full Reading Recovery program of 60 lessons.

Figures 2-4 show the frequency of number of lessons in more detail. In Figure 2, the frequency of the number of lessons during the first grade school year is shown. It appears that most of the children had under 58 lessons before the school year ended. However, a few had over 106 lessons, yet they were still carried over. In Figure 3, the frequency of the number of additional lessons while being carried over is shown. It appears that the majority of the children were carried over for less than 43 lessons, with a few who had over 60 additional lessons. Finally, Figure 4 shows the frequency of the total number of lessons, i.e., combining Figures 2 and 3. Generally, the majority of the students appear to be close to the mean of 65 total lessons.

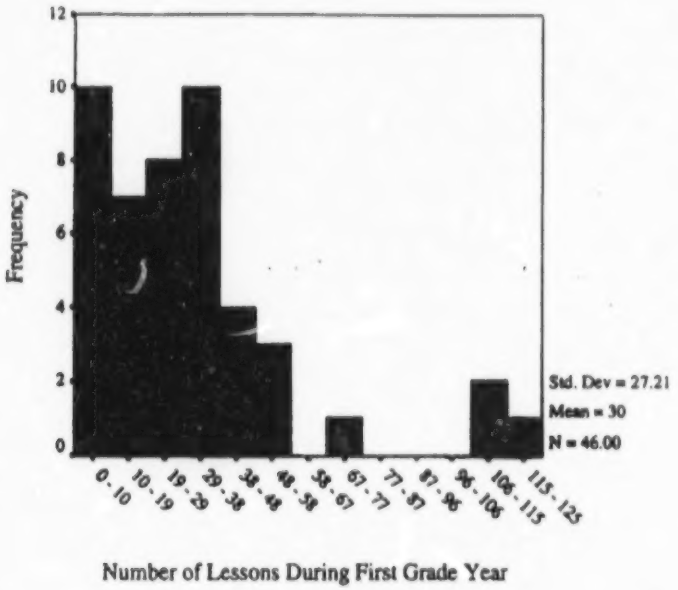

Figure 2. Frequency of the carried-over children's number of Reading Recovery lessons during the first grade school year.

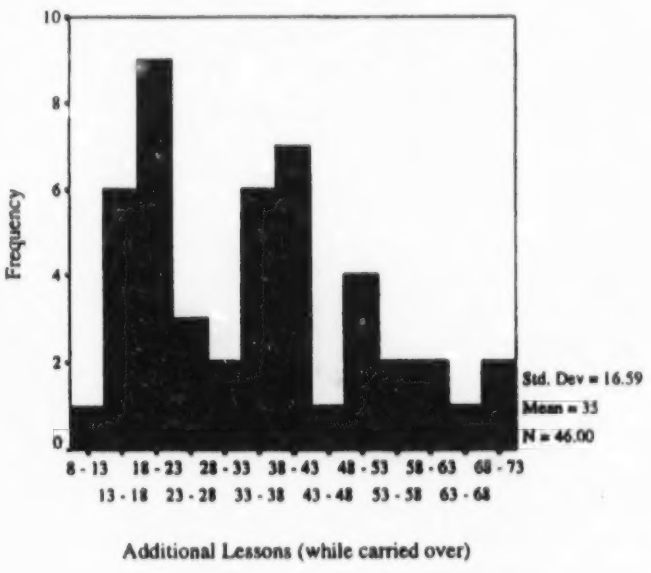

Figure 3. Frequency of the carried-over children's number of additional Reading Recovery lessons during the summer or the following fall (into second grade).

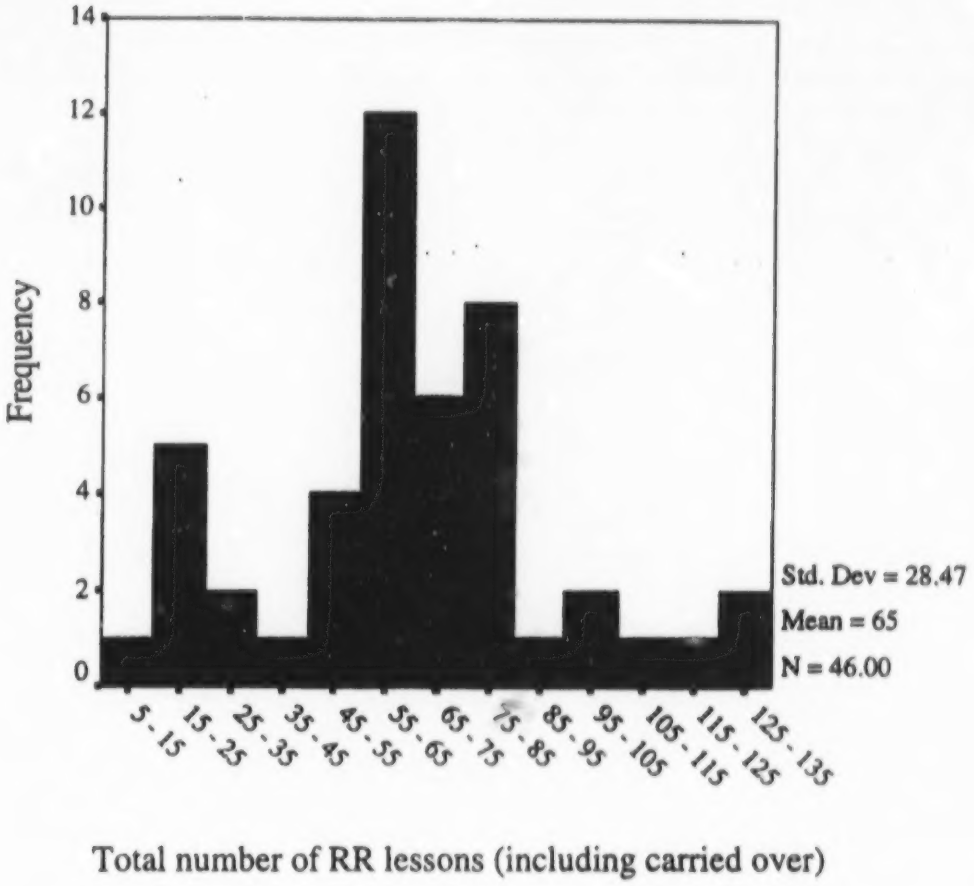

Figure 4. Frequency of the carried-over children's total number of Reading Recovery lessons.

Table 3 breaks down the mean, median, mode, and range for the number of lessons and weeks during the first grade school year, additional lessons and weeks as carried-over children, and total number of lessons and weeks, by end of program status. End of program status is broken down into three categories: Discontinued, Referred, or Still in the program.

Table 3.
Number of Lessons (and Weeks) in the Program for Carried-Over Children

	Discontinued (N=34)	Referred (N=5)	Still in the Program (N=7)
<u>During first grade school year</u>			
Mean	26 (9)	30 (9)	52 (16)
Median	24 (7)	32 (10)	52 (13)
Mode	30 (4)	32 (10)	52 (4)
Range	0-117 (2-34)	11-38 (3-12)	1-113 (4-36)
<u>During summer or following fall</u>			
Mean	37 (11)	44 (13)	17 (4)
Median	36 (11)	48 (13)	18 (4)
Mode	39 (8)	24 (8)	19 (4)
Range	16-72 (4-22)	24-67 (8-19)	11-20 (4-5)
<u>Total</u>			
Mean	62 (19)	74 (22)	69 (20)
Median	63 (21)	64 (21)	71 (18)
Mode	61 (22)	59 (17)	12 (8)
Range	16-134 (4-38)	59-99 (17-29)	12-132 (8-40)

Table 3 shows that the referred and still in the program carried-over children had a greater number of lessons during the first grade school year than those who discontinued. To try and understand why these children were carried-over, performance on the Observation Survey should be examined. Specifically, for the two groups of children who did not discontinue, spring scores should shed some light onto what skill level these children had achieved at the end of the first grade school year when they were selected to be carried over.

Performance of Carried-Over Children on the Observation Survey

Table 4 gives means, standard deviations, medians, modes, and ranges on the Observation Survey, at both entry to and exit from the Reading Recovery program. The carried-over children are shown in two categories: discontinued and not discontinued. The children who did not discontinue were either referred (N=5) or still in the program (N=7).

Table 4.
First Graders' Entry and Exit Mean Scores; Standard Deviations, Medians, Modes, and Ranges on six Observation Survey Measures

		Carried-Over Discontinued (N=34)				Carried-Over Not Discontinued (N=12)			
		Mean (Std Dev)	Median	Mode	Range	Mean (Std Dev)	Median	Mode	Range
Text Reading Level	Entry	4.6 (2.8)	5.0	7.0	0-9	2.7 (2.2)	3.0	3.0	0-8
	Exit	20.8 (2.7)	20.0	18.0	14-26	12.6 (3.5)	12.0	10.0	7-18
Writing Vocabulary	Entry	30.1 (16.9)	28.5	14.0	3-97	19.7 (10.2)	23.0	29.0	1-33
	Exit	56.3 (13.2)	55.0	42.0	34-90	42.6 (11.1)	41.0	26.0	26-63
HRS	Entry	26.3 (8.3)	29.5	32.0	2-36	24.9 (12.1)	29.0	28.0	0-36
	Exit	36.2 (0.8)	36.0	37.0	35-37	35.3 (1.4)	35.0	34.0	33-37
Ohio Word Test	Entry	8.4 (5.1)	8.5	15.0	0-18	4.6 (3.9)	3.5	0.0	0-14
	Exit	18.9 (1.6)	19.0	20.0	13-20	15.4 (2.4)	15.0	15.0	12-20
Concepts About Print	Entry	16.4 (3.5)	18.0	18.0	6-22	15.5 (3.3)	16.0	16.0	7-19
	Exit	23.4 (5.3)	23.0	23.0	19-51	21.2 (1.8)	21.0	21.0	17-23
Letter Identification	Entry	50.4 (5.9)	52.0	53.0	28-54	47.5 (10.6)	52.0	52.0	18-54
	Exit	53.8 (0.5)	54.0	54.0	52-54	53.3 (0.7)	53.0	53.0	52-54

Accelerated Progress of Carried-Over Children

In order to catch up to their peers, Reading Recovery children need to make accelerated progress in all areas of literacy skills because their scores in the fall are so much lower than the scores of a random sample of their peers. Table 5 depicts this progress in the form of gain scores. For carried-over children, a gain score is simply the child's exit score minus his or her entry score. A gain score is a way of measuring how much a child has progressed. It should be kept in mind, however, that ceiling effects occur in some of the measures (e.g., HRS, Ohio Word Test, Concepts About Print, and Letter ID). In other words, children with high entry scores are constrained somewhat in terms of the gains they can make, since the measures may not reach the high ends of some children's literacy skills.

Table 5.
Average Gain Scores from Entry testing to Exit testing on the Observation Survey

	Carried-Over Discontinued				**Carried-Over Not Discontinued**			
Observation Survey Test	Mean (Std Dev)	Median	Mode	Range	Mean (Std Dev)	Median	Mode	Range
Text Reading Level	16.3 (3.4)	16.0	15.0	9-25	9.9 (3.4)	10.0	11.0	5-16
Writing Vocabulary	26.9 (15.5)	23.0	21.0	2-63	18.6 (11.1)	22.0	11.0	0-34
HRS	9.2 (7.4)	7.0	4.0	1-29	10.3 (12.5)	6.0	5.0	-2*-36
Ohio Word Test	10.2 (4.7	11.0	11.0	2-19	10.9 (3.3)	11.0	14.0	5-14
Concepts About Print	6.6 (6.1)	5.0	4.0	0-33	4.4 (2.9)	4.0	4.0	-2*-7
Letter Identification	2.8 (4.9)	1.0	0.0	0-26	1.7 (2.3)	2.0	2.0	-1*-6

* The gain score is negative when the child's entry score is greater than the child's exit score.

A Closer Look at the Selection of Carried-Over Children

To examine why carried-over children do not discontinue, it is helpful to address selection procedures. Table 6 includes spring scores on the Observation Survey for the carried-over children who did not discontinue.

Table 6.
Spring Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, Medians, Modes, and Ranges on six Observation Survey Measures

	Referred (N=5)				Still in the program (N=7)			
	Mean (Std Dev)	Median	Mode	Range	Mean (Std Dev)	Median	Mode	Range
Text Reading Level	8.4 (3.4)	7.0	6.0	6-14	9.1 (2.2)	10.0	10.0	5-12
Writing Vocabulary	36.6 (18.9)	39.0	10.0	10-55	35.4 (8.4)	34.0	34.0	23-48
HRS	33.6 (2.6)	35.0	35.0	29-35	33.7 (3.1)	35.0	36.0	28-36
Ohio Word Test	13.2 (3.6)	12.0	10.0	10-19	13.9 (4.3)	15.0	12.0	6-19
Concepts About Print	20.4 (2.1)	20.0	18.0	18-23	19.1 (2.1)	20.0	21.0	16-21
Letter Identification	53.2 (0.8)	53.0	53.0	52-54	52.7 (0.5)	53.0	53.0	52-53

The concern that Table 6 raises, is that the overall achievement level of the carried-over referred children and carried-over children who are still in the program is much too low on many of the measures to expect that these children will accelerate at a pace necessary to discontinue, given a reasonable amount of additional lessons. Thus, some of these 12 children should not have been selected to have their programs carry over into the summer or fall because they would not be expected to benefit appropriately from the services of Reading Recovery.

Speech and Language Services

Data pertaining to the number of carried-over children who needed speech and language services were analyzed for the 30 carried-over children for whom this information was available. Figure 5 illustrates this by status. Half of the carried-over children who did not discontinue needed speech and language services. However, about 13% of the discontinued children also needed speech and language services. Therefore, need for speech and language services alone does not predict a child's subsequent status in Reading Recovery.

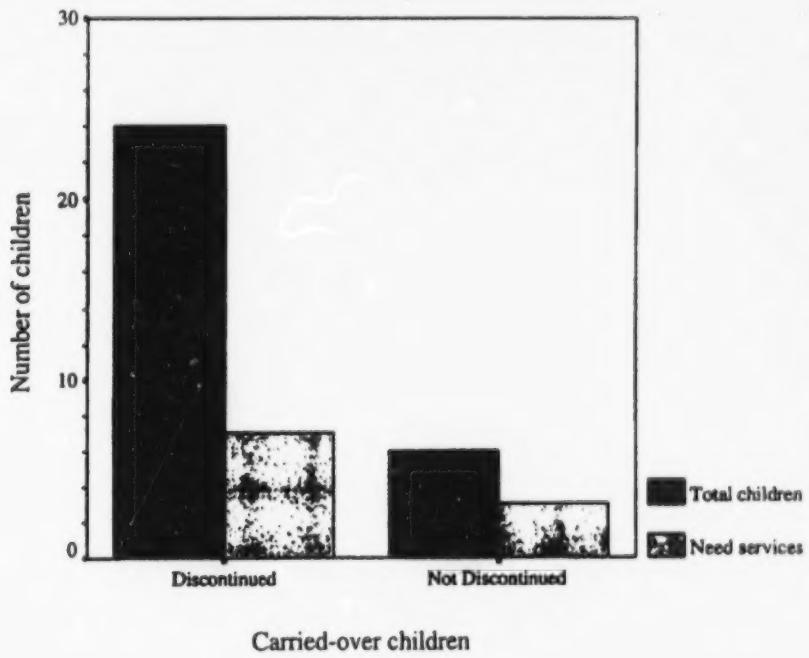

Figure 5. Number of carried-over children needing speech and language services.

Conclusions

This report summarizes Reading Recovery program results for 46 children whose program was carried over into the summer after first grade, or into the following fall of second grade. As more schools provide this service, it is important to establish a procedure for evaluating the program of carried-over children. This report attempts to outline the important student outcomes in an effort to assess and improve the effectiveness of the carry-over procedure.

Almost three-quarters (74%) of the carried-over children successfully discontinued from Reading Recovery, however we would expect this percentage to be higher. It appears that due to a lack of formal guidelines for carrying over children, some schools were unclear about which children would most benefit from having their programs carried over into the summer or following fall. In the 1996-1997 State Report, the program co-ordinator has outlined specific guidelines for carrying over children. These guidelines follow. They should improve the program effectiveness in subsequent years as more schools decide to offer carried-over programs.

Guidelines for Carrying Over Children

- **Consult with a Teacher Leader to assess the potential effectiveness of carrying children over in your school context.**
- **Consider carrying children over only if your school meets the new definition of fully implemented.**
- **Carry over no more than two children per Reading Recovery teacher.**
- **Carefully select the children to be carried over. Consider how many weeks a potential carry-over child has already completed in the program and the child's Text Reading Level at the end of grade one.**
- **For example, you would <u>not</u> carry over a child who has already received sixteen weeks of the program but is only reading at text level eight. This child is not making accelerated progress and would still be too far out of step with entering grade two achievement (text levels 18-20) to make carrying over an effective option.**
- **Begin the carried-over children's programs by administering the Observation Survey and Roaming Around the Known. Research indicates that carried-over children, like regular Reading Recovery children, make accelerated progress when they are fluent and flexible with what they already know.**
- **Teach hard to ensure that carried-over children are discontinued by November or December of the second grade school year.**
- **Meet regularly with the second grade teachers to ensure the carried-over children are transferring reading and writing skills to the second grade program.**
- **Discontinue children when they have achieved a self-extending system (at least text level 18) and there is an appropriate classroom group where they can continue to learn just from classroom instruction. It may be unrealistic to expect carried-over children to achieve average of the class at the second grade level as text difficulty levels rise steeply.**
- **Assess the effectiveness of carrying children over with your school team at a regularly scheduled team meeting. You will want to ensure that your school team continues to be committed to Reading Recovery as a short-term, accelerative, first grade intervention.**
- **Please submit data on carried-over children as outlined by your Teacher Leader so we can assess the effectiveness on a State basis.**